

The End of Communism in Russia Meant the End of Democracy in the West

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*Alexander Zinoviev, along with Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, was one of the three great intellectual giants who became dissidents during the late Soviet period. This remarkable and prophetic interview was originally published in 1999 in the French Figaro Magazine. Its original title was: “**The West and Russia - A Controlled Catastrophe**”*

An annual conference attended by Russian and foreign luminaries and Zinoviev fans in memory of Zinoviev’s work will be held in Moscow on October 27.

*Translated from **Russian** especially for **RI** by Sergei Malygin and Andrey Medvedev*

Alexander Zinoviev was exiled from the Soviet Union with his wife and daughter on 6th August 1978, principally on account of his writings on the nature of Soviet communism. They spent the next twenty years based in Munich. On 30th July 1999 they returned to Moscow, principally on account of his writings on the West. Zinoviev died in 2006 and his remains are buried in the Novodeviche convent.

*These few lines suggest that he must have been a remarkable man. He was. Born in 1922 to a Russian peasant family, he was the sixth of eleven children who became an international phenomenon in a variety of fields: philosophy (particularly in the field of many-valued logic), literature (novels, novellas, poetry), politics, sociology, and painting. The two books which, for me, best illustrate the reasons for his exile and rehabilitation are, respectively, *The Reality of Communism* and *The West*.*

This, Zinoviev’s last interview before returning to Russia provides an excellent example of his unmatched forensic gifts as a sociologist.

I look forward to sharing with friends of RI further details of the life and work of Aleksander Aleksandrovich in future columns.

Michael Kirkwood

Leading specialist on Zinoviev, professor emeritus, University of Glasgow.

Q. With what feelings are you returning home after such a long exile?

A. With a feeling that I once left a strong, respected, even awe-inspiring power. Returning now, I found a defeated country in ruins. Unlike others, I would never have left the USSR if I had had a choice. Emigration was a real punishment for me.

Q. Nevertheless, you were welcomed with open arms here! (in Germany - Ed. Note)

A. That is true... But despite the triumphant recognition and the worldwide success of my books, I have always felt like a stranger here.

Q. After the collapse of communism the Western system has become the main focus of your research. Why?

A. Because what happened was what I had predicted: the fall of communism turned into the breakup of Russia.

Q. So the fight with communism was a conspiracy to destroy Russia?

A. Precisely. I say this because once I was an unwitting accomplice of this action that I found shameful. The West wanted and programmed the Russian catastrophe. I read documents and participated in the research, which under the guise of ideological struggle worked towards the destruction of Russia. This became so unbearable for me that I could no longer stay in the camp of those who destroy my people and my country. The West is not a stranger to me, but I consider it an enemy empire.

Q: Have you become a patriot?

A: Patriotism does not concern me. I received an international upbringing and I remain loyal to it. I cannot even say whether I love Russians and Russia or not. I am part of them. Today's suffering of my people is so horrible that I cannot stand watching them from afar. The barbarity of globalization manifests itself in many diverse, unacceptable ways.

Q: Nevertheless, many former Soviet dissidents speak about their former homeland as a country of human rights and democracy. Now that this point of view has become commonly accepted in the West, you are trying to refute it. Isn't there a contradiction here?

A: During the Cold War, democracy was a weapon in the fight against communist totalitarianism. Today we understand that the Cold War era was the history of the West's apogee. During that time the West had it all: unprecedented growth of wealth, true freedom, incredible social progress, colossal scientific and technological achievements. But at the same time the West was imperceptibly changing. The timid integration of developed countries launched at that time has developed into the internationalization of the economy and the globalization of power that we are witnessing now. Integration may help the growth of common good and have a positive impact if it is driven by the legitimate aspiration of fraternal people to unite, for example. But the integration in question was conceived from the beginning as a vertical structure strictly controlled by a supranational power. Without a successful Russian counter-revolution against the Soviet Union, the West could not have started the process of globalization.

Q: So, the role of Gorbachev was not positive?

A: I look at things from a slightly different angle. Contrary to common belief, Soviet communism did not collapse because of internal reasons. Its collapse is certainly the greatest victory in the history of the West. An unheard of victory which, let me say it again, can establish a unitary power monopoly on a planetary scale. The end of communism also signalized the end of democracy. The modern epoch is not only post-communist, it is also post-democratic! Today we are witnessing the establishment of democratic totalitarianism, or, if you will, totalitarian democracy.

Q: Does not it all sound a little absurd?

A: Not at all. Democracy requires pluralism and pluralism implies an existence of at least two more or less equal forces which oppose each other and at the same time influence each other. During the Cold War there was world democracy, global pluralism, with two opposing systems: capitalist and communist, plus other countries with an amorphous system which belonged to neither. Soviet totalitarianism was sensitive to Western criticism. In turn, the Soviet Union influenced the West, in particular through the latter's own communist parties. Today we live in a world dominated by one single force, one ideology and one pro-globalization party. All of this together began to take shape during the Cold War, when superstructures gradually appeared in various forms: commercial, banking, political and media organizations. Despite their different fields of activity, what they had in common was essentially their transnational scope. With the collapse of communism they began to rule the world. Thus, Western countries ended up in the dominant position, but at the same time they are now in a subordinate position as they gradually lose their sovereignty to what I call the supra-society. The planet-wide supra-society consists of commercial and non-commercial organizations whose influence extends far beyond individual states. Like other countries, the Western countries are subordinated to these supranational structures. This is despite the fact that the sovereignty of states was also an integral part of pluralism and hence of democracy on a global scale. Today's ruling supra-power suppresses sovereign states. The European integration unfolding in front of our very eyes is also leading to the disappearance of pluralism within this new conglomerate in favor of supranational power.

Q: But do not you think that France and Germany remain democracies?

A: Western countries got to know true democracy during the Cold War. Political parties had genuine ideological differences and different political programs. The media also differed from each other. All this had an impact on the lives of ordinary people contributing to the growth of their wealth. Now this has come to an end. A democratic and prosperous capitalism with socially oriented laws and job security was in many ways thanks to a fear of communism. After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, a massive attack on the social rights of citizens was launched in the West. Today the socialists who are in power in most European countries are pursuing policies of dismantling the social security system, destroying everything that was socialist in the capitalist countries. There is no longer a political force in the West capable of protecting ordinary citizens. The existence of political parties is a mere formality. They will differ less and less as time goes on. The war in the Balkans was anything but democratic. Nevertheless, the war was perpetrated by the socialists who historically have been against these kinds of ventures. Environmentalists, who are in power in some countries, welcomed the environmental catastrophe caused by the NATO bombings. They even dared to claim that bombs containing depleted uranium are not dangerous for the environment, even though soldiers loading them wear special protective overalls. Thus, democracy is gradually disappearing from the social structure of the West. Totalitarianism is spreading everywhere because the supranational structure imposes its laws on individual states. This undemocratic superstructure gives orders, imposes sanctions, organizes embargos, drops bombs, causes hunger. Even Clinton obeys it. Financial totalitarianism has subjugated political power. Emotions and compassion are alien to cold financial totalitarianism. Compared with financial dictatorship, political dictatorship is humane. Resistance was possible inside the most brutal dictatorships. Rebellion against banks is impossible.

Q: What about a revolution?

A: Democratic totalitarianism and financial dictatorship rule out the possibility of social revolution.

Q: Why?

A: Because they combine omnipotent military power with a financial stranglehold. All revolutions received support from outside. From now on this is impossible because there are no sovereign states, nor will there be. Moreover, at the lowest level the working class has been replaced with the unemployed class. What do the unemployed want? Jobs. Therefore, they are in a less advantageous position than the working class of the past.

Q: All totalitarian systems had their own ideology. What is the ideology of the new society you call post-democratic?

A: The most influential Western thinkers and politicians believe that we have entered the post-ideological epoch. This is because by “ideology” they mean communism, fascism, nazism, etc. In reality, the ideology, the super-ideology of the Western world, developed over the last fifty years is much stronger than communism or national socialism. A western citizen is being brainwashed much more than a soviet citizen ever was during the era of communist propaganda. In ideology, the main thing is not the ideas, but rather the mechanisms of their distribution. The might of the Western media, for example, is incomparably greater than that of the propaganda mechanisms of the Vatican when it was at the zenith of its power. And it is not only the cinema, literature, philosophy – all the levers of influence and mechanisms used in the promulgation of culture, in its broadest sense, work in this direction. At the slightest impulse all who work in this area respond with such consistency that it is hard not to think that all orders come from a single source of power. It was enough to decide to stigmatize General Karadžić or President Milošević or someone else for the whole planetary propaganda machine to start working against them. As a result, instead of condemning politicians and NATO generals for violation of all existing laws, the vast majority of Western citizens is convinced that the war against Serbia was necessary and just. Western ideology combines and mixes ideas based on its needs. One of these ideas is that Western values and lifestyle are the best in the world! Although for most people on the planet these values have disastrous consequences. Try to convince Americans that these values will destroy Russia. You will not be able to. They will continue to assert the thesis of universalism of Western values, therefore following one of the fundamental principles of ideological dogmatism. Theorists, politicians and media of the West are absolutely sure that their system is the best. That is why they impose it around the world without a doubt and with a clear conscience. Western man as the carrier of these highest values is therefore a new superman. The term itself is a taboo, but it all comes down to this. This phenomenon should be studied scientifically. But I dare to say that it has become extremely difficult to conduct scientific research in some areas of sociology and history. The scientist who desires to research mechanisms of democratic totalitarianism will face extreme difficulties. He will be made into an outcast. On the other hand, those whose research serves the dominant ideology are flooded with grants while publishing houses and media are fighting for the right to work with such authors. I have personally experienced it when I have been teaching and working as a researcher at foreign universities.

Q: Does not this super-ideology you dislike, have ideas of tolerance and respect for others?

A: When you listen to representatives of the Western elite, everything seems so pure, generous and respectful to people. Doing so they use the classic rule of propaganda: hide the reality behind sweet talk. However it is enough to turn on the TV, go to the movies, open a bestselling book or listen to popular music to realize the opposite: the unprecedented dissemination of the cult of violence, sex and money. Noble speeches are designed to hide these three (and there are more) pillars of totalitarian democracy.

Q: What about human rights? Is it not the West who honors them the most?

A: From now on the idea of human rights is increasingly under pressure. Even the purely ideological thesis that these rights are intrinsic and inseparable today will not sustain even the first stage of a thorough analysis. I am ready to subject Western ideology to the same scientific analysis that I did with communism. But this is a long conversation, not for today's interview.

Q: Does Western ideology have a key idea?

A: The idea of globalization! In other words, world domination! Since this idea is rather unpleasant, it is hidden under lengthy phrases about planetary unity, transformation of the world into one integrated whole... In reality, the West has now commenced work on structural changes across the whole planet. On the one hand Western society dominates the world, on the other hand it itself is being rebuilt vertically with the supranational power on the very top of the pyramid.

Q: World government?

A: Yes, if you will.

Q: To believe in it, doesn't that mean to be a victim of delusional fantasies about global conspiracy?

A: What conspiracy? There is no conspiracy. The world government is controlled by the heads of well known supranational economic, financial and political structures. According to my estimates, this super-society, now ruling the world, has about fifty million people. Its center is the United States. The countries of Western Europe and some former Asian "dragon" countries are its basis. Other countries are dominated under a tight financial and economic ranking. This is the reality. Regarding propaganda, it presumes that the creation of world government under control of the world parliament is desirable because the world is a big brotherhood. All these are just stories designed for the plebs.

Q: The European Parliament as well?

A: No, because the European Parliament exists. But it is naive to believe that the European Union was a result of the good will of the governments of the member states. The European Union is a weapon for the destruction of national sovereignties. It is part of the projects developed by supranational organisms.

Q: The European commonwealth changed its name after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As if to replace the Soviet Union, it was called the "European Union". After all, it could be called differently. Like bolsheviks, European leaders call themselves commissioners. Like bolsheviks they head commissions. The last president was "elected" being the only candidate ...

A: We must not forget that the process of social organization is subject to certain rules. To organize a million people is one thing, to organize ten million is another, to organize a hundred million is a very hard task. To organize five hundred million people is a task of colossal proportions. It is necessary to create new administrative bodies, to train people who will manage them and to ensure their smooth functioning. This is the primary task. In fact, the Soviet Union is a classic example of a multinational conglomerate led by a supranational management structure. The European Union wants to achieve better results than the Soviet Union! That is justified. Even twenty years ago I was stunned by the fact that so-called flaws of the Soviet system were even more developed in the West.

Q: Like what?

A: Planning! The Western economy is infinitely more planned than the economy of the USSR was ever planned. Bureaucracy! In the Soviet Union 10 to 12% of the active population worked in the country's management and administration field. In the US this number is 16 to 20%. However the USSR was criticized for its planned economy and the burden of bureaucratic apparatus. Two thousand people worked in the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The Communist Party apparatus reached 150 thousand workers. Today in the West you will find dozens, even hundreds of enterprises in industrial and banking sectors employing more people. The bureaucratic apparatus of the Soviet Communist Party was negligibly small compared with the staff of large transnational corporations of the West. In fact, we must recognize that the USSR was mismanaged because of the lack of administrative staff. It was necessary to have two to three times more administrative workers! The European Union is well aware of these problems and therefore takes them into account. Integration is impossible without an impressive administrative apparatus.

Q: What you say is contradictory to the ideas of liberalism promoted by European leaders. Do you not think that their liberalism is just a show?

A: The administration has a tendency to grow greatly which is dangerous in itself. It knows that. Like any organism it finds antidotes to continue its normal functioning. A private initiative is one of them. Another antidote is social and individual morality. Applying them, power fights self-destructive tendencies. So it invented liberalism to create a counterweight to its own gravity. Today, however, it is absurd to be a liberal. The liberal society no longer exists. The liberal doctrine does not reflect the realities of the unprecedented era of concentration of capital. The movement of huge financial resources does not take into account the interests of individual states and peoples consisting of individuals. Liberalism implies a personal initiative and taking of financial risks. Today any business needs money provided by banks. These banks, whose numbers are diminishing, implement a policy which is by its nature dictatorial and manipulative. Business owners are at their mercy because everything is subject to lending and therefore is under the control of financial institutions. The importance of the individual – the basis of liberalism – is reduced day by day. Today it does not matter who heads this or that company, this or that country: Bush or Clinton, Kohl or Schröder, Chirac or Jospin, what is the difference?

Q: The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century were extremely cruel, which cannot be said about Western democracy.

A: It's not the means that are important, but the end result obtained. Would you like an example? In the struggle against Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union lost 20 million people (according to the latest figures of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation – 27 million. – Ed. Note) and suffered tremendous destruction. During the Cold War, a war without bombs and guns, there were a lot more losses any way you look at it! Over the last decade the life expectancy of Russians dropped by ten years! The death rate is much higher than the birth rate. Two million children do not sleep at home. Five million school-age children do not attend school. There are 12 million registered drug addicts. Alcoholism has become universal. 70% of young people are not suitable for military service due to various physical defects. These are the direct consequences of the defeat in the Cold War, followed by a transition to a Western lifestyle. If this continues, the population will drop rapidly at first from 150 million to 100 million, and then to 50 million. Democratic totalitarianism will surpass all previous totalitarian regimes.

Q: Through violence?

A: Drugs, poor nutrition, and AIDS are much more effective than military violence. Although after the immense force of destruction of the Cold War, the West invented a "humanitarian war". The military campaigns in Iraq and Yugoslavia are two examples of collective punishment and retaliation on an exceedingly large scale, while the

propaganda machine shapes them as a “good cause” or a “humanitarian war”. Turning the victims of violence against themselves is another, different approach. An example of its use is the Russian counter-revolution of 1985. However, when they unleashed the war in Yugoslavia, the countries of Western Europe led war against themselves.

Q. In your opinion, the war against Serbia was also a war against Europe?

A. Absolutely right. In Europe there are forces that can compel it to act against itself. Serbia was chosen because it resisted the ever-expanding globalization. Russia could be next on the list. Before China...

Q: In spite of its nuclear arsenal?

A: Russia’s nuclear arsenal is huge, but it is outdated. Besides, the Russians are morally disarmed and ready to surrender... I believe that the monstrosity of the 21st century will surpass everything that mankind has seen to this day. Just think about the coming global war on Chinese communism. To defeat such a populous country one will need not exterminate around 500 million people, not 10 or 20 million. Today, given the level of excellence of the propaganda machine, it is quite possible. Naturally, it will be done in the name of freedom and human rights. Unless, of course, some PR organization invents a new and no less noble a cause.

Q: Don’t you think that people can have their own opinions, and that they can vote and thus express themselves?

ANSWER. First of all, even now people don’t vote that often, and they will vote even less in the future. With regard to public opinion in the West it is shaped by the media. Suffice it to recall the universal approval of the war in Kosovo. Remember the Spanish war! Volunteers from all over the world traveled to that country to fight on one side or the other. Remember the war in Vietnam. But these days, people are so well shepherded that they react only the way that the purveyors of propaganda want them to.

Q: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were the most multi-ethnic countries in the world, but they were destroyed nevertheless. Do you see a connection between the destruction of multiethnic countries, on the one hand, and the promotion of multi-ethnicity on the other hand?

A: Soviet totalitarianism created a genuinely multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. It was the Western democracies that made superhuman efforts to fan the flames of various kinds of nationalism, because they considered the breakup of the Soviet Union as the best way to destroy it. The same mechanism worked in Yugoslavia. Germany had always sought the obliteration of Yugoslavia. United, Yugoslavia could strengthen its resistance. The essence of the Western system is to divide in order to make it easier for the West to impose its laws on all parties, and then act as Chief Justice. There is no reason to assume that this know-how will not be applied in relation to the dismemberment of China in the future.

Q: India and China voiced their opposition to the bombing of Yugoslavia. If needed, could they form a core of resistance? After all, 2 billion people are no joke!

A: The means of those countries cannot in any way be compared with the military might and technological superiority of the West.

Q: Were you impressed by the effectiveness of the US military arsenal in Yugoslavia?

A: Not only that. If such a decision had been made, then Serbia would have ceased to exist within a few hours. Apparently, the leaders of the new world order have chosen a strategy of permanent violence. Numerous localized conflicts will now keep igniting one

after another so that the “humanitarian war” machine, which we have already seen in action, could keep extinguishing them. In fact, this is likely to become the solution to extending control over the entire planet. The West controls most of the Earth’s natural resources. Its intellectual resources are millions of times greater than the resources of the rest of the world. This is the foundation of the overwhelming hegemony of the West in technology, the arts, media, IT, and science, and this implies its superiority in all other areas. It would be too easy to just conquer the world. After all, they still need to rule! And this is the fundamental problem that the Americans are trying to address now... Remember that in the time of Christ, the population of earth was only about 100 million people. Today, Nigeria alone has that number of inhabitants! A billion “westernoids” and the people assimilated by them will rule the entire world. However, this billion, in turn, also needs to be controlled. In all probability, two hundred million people will be required to control the Western world. But they must be chosen and taught. That’s why China is doomed to failure in its struggle against the hegemony of the West. The country does not have enough control, nor economic and intellectual resources to implement an effective administrative system consisting of approximately 300 million people. Only the West is able to solve the problems of global governance. It has already started to do so. Hundreds of thousands of “westernoids” in the former communist countries, such as Russia, tend to occupy leadership positions there. Totalitarian democracy will also be a colonial democracy.

Q: According to Marx, apart from violence and cruelty, colonization also brought with it the blessings of civilization. Perhaps the history of mankind is simply repeating itself at this new stage?

A: Indeed, why not? But, alas, not for everyone. What kind of contribution to civilization has been made by American Indians? Almost none, as they were crushed, destroyed, and wiped off the face of the Earth. Now look at the contribution of the Russians! Let me make an important point here: the West did not fear Soviet military power as much as its intellectual, artistic, and athletic potential. The West saw that the Soviet Union was full of life! This is the most important thing that must be destroyed, should one wish to destroy one’s enemy. Which is precisely what was done. Today, Russian science is dependent on US funding. It is in a pitiful state because the US is not interested in financing its competition. Americans prefer to offer Russian scientists jobs in the United States. Soviet cinema, too, has been destroyed and replaced by American movies. The same thing happened to literature. World domination manifests itself primarily as an intellectual, or, if you prefer, a cultural diktat. Which is why in the last few decades, Americans have so zealously tried to bring down the cultural and intellectual common denominator of the entire world to their own level – it will allow them to impose this diktat.

Q: But might this domination turn out to be a blessing for all mankind?

A. Ten generations from now, people will, indeed, be able to say that it all happened in the name of humanity, i.e. for their greater good. But what about the Russians or the French who are alive today? Should they be happy that their people will have the same future as the American Indians? The term “humanity” is an abstraction. In reality, there are Russian, French, Serbs, etc. However, if the current trend continues, then the nations who founded modern civilization (I mean the Latin peoples), will gradually disappear. Western Europe is already bursting with foreigners. We have yet to speak about it, but this phenomenon is not accidental, and it is certainly not the consequence of the allegedly uncontrollable human migration flows. The goal for Europe is to create a situation similar to the situation in the United States. I suspect that the French will hardly be delighted to learn that mankind will come to be happy, but only without the French. After all, it might well be a rational project to only leave a limited number of people in the world, who could then live in a paradise on earth. Those remaining people would certainly believe that their happiness is the result of historical development... No. All that matters is the life that we and our loved ones are living today.

Q: The Soviet system was ineffective. Are all totalitarian societies doomed to inefficiency?

A: What is efficiency? The US spends more money on weight loss than Russia spends on its entire public budget. Still, the number of overweight people is growing. And such examples are many.

Q: Would it be correct to say that the intensifying radicalization in the West will lead to its own destruction?

A: Nazism was destroyed during total war. The Soviet system was young and strong. It would have continued to thrive, had it not been destroyed by outside forces. Social systems do not destroy themselves. They can only be destroyed by an external force. It's like a ball rolling on a surface: only the presence of an external obstacle could break its movement. I can prove it like a theorem. Today, we are dominated by a country with enormous economic and military superiority. The new emerging world order is drawn to unipolarity. If the supranational government manages to achieve this by eliminating all external enemies, then a unified social system can survive until the end of time. Only a person can die from their illness. But a group of people, even a small group, would try to survive through reproduction. Now imagine a social system comprising billions of people! Its capacity to anticipate and prevent self-destructive phenomena will be limitless. In the foreseeable future, the process of erasing differences across the world cannot be stopped, since democratic totalitarianism is the last phase of the development of Western society, which began with the Renaissance.